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THE BELOIT POETRY JOURNAL

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THE BELOIT POETRY JOURNAL

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ELIZA TELEFAIR

Wearily, still in her dressing gown,
she walked on the beach shortly after dawn
through tremulous stillness. Heat had grown

with the flowering night. I'll go to the pier.
Locusts thundered, "Beware. Beware!"
A shy grouse jittered, "Don't go too far."

Coiled bright-eyed in the sun-drenched brush,
"Let her alone," a grass snake hissed.

She wandered across the lake lapped stones,
over quartz shining fishes' bones
heaped in their graveyard. "Here she comes—,"

the bittern quavered. The black bass swung
in a shoreward arc, the seagull hung
from his sky trapeze as she moved along

into beckoning day. Newly begun,
no longer enwombed, she was bird and sun,
she was earth and water and fish and stone.

Nothing, yet all, she went down the pier,
wrapped in her glittering shroud of air.

Jocelyn Macy Sloan

WAVES

Take, for convention's sake, two lovers, hand
in hand, on some long beach, beseiged by rank
on rank of waves. Indistinguishable,
these lovers, waves, this scalloped rind of sand,

a notion, all, in the mind of God, until
you look at particularities; e.g.,
the boy explains mortality and such
indecorous considerations, will,

or absence of it, molecules, and how
the waves are made. He finds her patient, as
girls are with thoughts.
"How can you say," he says,
"that men or waves are fools? What *if* they wallow

home in fits, like drunks, or with foamy lips fall
in the shallows? Do you know they are patterns of
rotating particles, that while the wave
departs, the water stays, and, after all,

why not expect what likely will betide?
The fact that waves recur, recur, that each
learns nothing from the last, that as they spray
and decompose, they rustle, satisified,

as though it were relief to lose a ton
or so of self, as though identity
too long had imposed on facelessness, as though
they know the end is not an end (for one,

becoming many, soon is all), the fact
that waves wish nothing (and, if they were to,
would only want the shore) is proof enough . . . "

"That they are fools," she says, with lack of tact.

"That judgment is irrelevant," says the boy,
facing, like Hell, which must be faced, the moon
lighting like science hopelessly the bright
and headless shoulders bending to destroy

all shoulderness.
"But *we* are different!" finds
she now, and he detects no irony.

"Of course! The cosmic fidget which impels
all curves knows medians of many kinds,

but never quite creates them. Random curves
within a range are near enough for our
universe, which, with timeless practicing
still has its gesture shaken by its nerves.

The wave is form; yet not the form exact,
but momentary shape of ocean; yet
not shape alone,but shape plus molecules;
or shape and stuff and motion make the fact.

So we are different, within our range,
as any wave, one instant from the last,
or any instant from all other waves—
each self a constant in a sea of change . . . "

"By we I don't mean waves, but *us*" she cries,
the way that girls pronounce that mystic *us*.
"I know we are not waves in shape or kind,
for I can judge, and you can analyze."

(Bitter in this, if he but knew it. She
sees all that sand, some of it dry, unused
and thinks whatever they are walking for
is not down the endless beach nor in the sea.)

"Analysis is irrelevant." (She concurs;
he drops her hand to gesture.) "What is, is;

and we may do what all the waves and weather
behind, the floor of sand beneath that stirs,

the line of shore that interrupts, and laws
of physics make us do; reflection is
one way of passing time, rotating to
our end."
"I know another," soft because

she now is half convinced there is no way
of saving waves that make so ponderously.
"But are they mournful," she asks, "as they
roll into the end? And do they feel decay,

even of molecules? Are waves, like us,
aware that one way logic lies, another
sense, and that of the two, logic is truer,
but a joke, and sense, that lie preposterous,

persists compellingly? If not composed
of any particular water, and yet not quite
the form intended, but just this shape, with some
consistency (a way curls are disposed

along a frothy forehead), not really real,
if real implies definable, if waves,
like us, are so inconstant, but each so clearly
no other, do they tell this fib I feel

they *must* tell to the little waves, this story
that one is something laws have overlooked,
that freedom is the gift of randomness,
and that in choosing is one's private glory,

doing, that is, what one must *try* to do . . . "

Well, he grew tired of incoherency
and kissed her, as water reaches in a cove
and wets the dry, surrounds and filters through.

Judson Jerome

MILL HOLLOW

"Everything must be imagined."—**The Idiot**

Here in the mill and sacred hollow
Where the yellow house is black with pitch
And the hole at the end of the road swallows
My joy in the closed mill windows' eyes,

Here where the lawn slopes downward to the lake
And the shades where lowered in the house behind
my back,

I leave gentility behind
Like mold upon a principle or citrus rind.

The mica mines in the distance where I found
My bits of heaven by a headlamp
Or by chance
Stay at the lakeside where I heard
My first invisible word.

Here the rains and fire hushed the house
And thunder dropped its diamonds on the hearth.
I watched each, like Prometheus long inbound
Pondering his memories in waves of fire.

Here on the hillside settlement and ground
I leaned against a door and waited
As if it were the Whalingman's Museum
Where an Asian merman had been found
With salmon-tail and pigmy-human head
Where once I felt: a terrible beauty is dead,

And everything was imagined, as the Russian said,
Where nothing was relieved by sound.

Herbert Mason

THE WILLOW GIRL

My head in summer fills with willows,
Not Ophelia's, fingering waters,
Nor others lachrymose in song:
I feel the incandescent toss
Of four—tremendous, clustering
A hidden pool in one bright mass.

From the hill in spring, it seemed an island
Treasuring a sway of grasses.
Later, it blazoned stubble sea
Where one meridian of wire
Incised the clump to cut away
The pool when horses pastured there.

Two horses worked the sea new changes.
Nibbling the overhanging willows,
They slowly carved the island mass
Into a girl with green bobbed hair,
Scissored in bangs above the close,
Brushed to the field beyond the wire.

From her nape waved plumes of pampas grass,
An oval shadow was her face.
Dreaming in newts and roots and moss,
Sometimes nodding, she would gaze
Across the stubbled pasture, stretched
Like level sawdust to the hill,
Until a team of horses hitched
With leisured air in ritual,
A black, a bay, graced by the trees,
Would walk into the sun from all
The green vacation of her eyes.

Sheridan Baker

SHADOWS

1. I would like to make love in Coolonga-doon
on deep musty moss
hidden by a thicket of black roses.
I would like mysterious music
played by turquoise crickets
and navy blue frogs and
tenderness so sweet
that my tears would run blood red
and jewel my bed.

2. I looked from my window
and saw a man gazing at me.
I was elegant then and proud
and he was shabby, shabby
and I said very low so that he could not hear
"Love me and remember me
for I would like to be the woman of your dreams
and know that you can never have me.
Then when I am old
and no longer elegant
and no longer proud,
when my teeth have rotted
and my hair has become like ash-colored weeds
then I shall pass your window . . . . . .
but I shall not remember you."

3. I would like to be a tall tree in a great wind
and feel the part of me that is a leaf
break with agony from my bough and

be teased back to the wound again
and again . . . . . .
then to fall swiftly to the ground
covering a black beetle
beaten by a blade of grass.

Mary Jackson

PENELOPE'S SUITORS IN HELL

Well, no one considered anything wrong:
foxy grandpa limped to his farm in the hills,
the brat fetched and carried and grew up strong,
we slept with her maids, she slept with her chills.

Love costs money, we said, what good's delay?
We dined and we danced, played at arms, shot craps
and spent our few good years like a spring day.
We welcomed strangers for we feared no traps.

You know what happened, they teach it in schools:
we paid for discourtesy with our lives,
love is faithful, and we were a pack of fools.

It may save you running, so let's get it straight:
there are two nowheres, here where man arrives
and there where he pursues a withering mate.

Jascha Kessler

TWO POEMS

The Baby Cockatrice

I'd read of the vast reptiles, maybe seen
Some musty drawings of them, years ago.
The rumor that such creatures have once been
Will make a child fear, idly, *They are, now.*

Preoccupied and happy, I had fished
Well through a June day on Commotion Creek
And had my limit; now the water rushed
In shadow, mostly. Almost at the lake

I climbed the bank, tired, quiet. There he was.
He happened; total; there. He barely lay
A finger long—bone mouth and ruff and claws,
The plated body, and, shock on shock, the eye.

And once I turned, all I had been stood there
Whole, in a gaze where no more could occur.

Alan Stephens

Written From a Grove

Here all's enclosed; for seven days
I've camped in this blue-shaded wood—
My study, and my scholar ways
Vacated; I have played the mute,
Lone with perception as the brute,
Whose world is in him, understood.

And all's enclosed and done: I note
The blue-glazed wing, the striped fur,

The incised hoof and creamy throat—
If the beginning was a word
These are the end, who never heard.
Moment on moment, they occur.

Should but one concept, alien, knock
At the creation they contain,
They are so hearted that the shock
Would bring not death, their common care,
But sudden indifference in the air,
And the creation to explain.

Alive to their sweet necessity
(As I work backward into speech)
The wild bees bend the timothy,
Take, and depart. I see, name, know,
Take in the distance where they go,
Bring bright creation within reach.

Alan Stephens

I WOULD TIPTOE SOFTLY

I would tiptoe softly into death
and squint my eyes,
for fear its light is meant
to blind the bold.

And yet, because I love the wise
I'd wear a scholar's cap to death
and have a dissertation typed
to argue for my place among the fold.

Still, since I fear the lion so
a golden mane must mask my throat:
then I might leap down death with hungry growls
and set my paw against the chin of God.

Joan Byrne

MARGINALIA AND MEMO

Tuesday (track heavy) July
who cares? re Ernestine do not
respond (hoor) repeat: contempt
is the better part of value (sign
for check, fake lathe job at Whiting—
George will back you up.)
She, Pearl, Ruby? Pearl. Gr 7-what-what-2-3?
Read Jones on Morphy. Study Lasker. Letter
to Curtis, threats should work (that railroad!)
Get them give you letter goddam you didn't
blow it up!
PM: words: ankylose, dolman, sabretaches.
Gr 7-what-6-4?-3. Just because
she's colored (you're the racist!) Mex good
for two, steer off geldings. U.P. job?
See doctor if poss. Bd. of Ed. (Try Hart
for five, no, ten. Basic principle: oversell.)

God, the way she moved! Animal, thighs,
croup, belly. Swinging. Swinging. A dancer,
unless she just . . . Pearl. Gr 7-9643? No, by
God, no chopchop there. Pure swinging. Luck
like that and you with a memory for horses.
Invest a buck. Gr 7-5643? Something like that.
God, she'd make you forget you had a head!

Later: call mother, roast will keep. (She
wants it pure, that one. Goddam these walls!)
No liquor, no books, no fairyland. Pleasure
principle?! Viper, you'll die! Cases, tout:
haircut, shirts. See Kelly for suit. Pad?
Pad? Chris? Helen? Helen. Okay. Check Helen.
Check Hart. Now then, Pearl. Gr. 7-5643.

Later: Hart knows what he can do, if I have
to bust another knuckle proving it. Good thing
it wasn't the money. Read "Day of the Locust."
Study "Basic Chess Endings." (Thank Helen. Good
kid, Helen. Hmmmm.) Enter park tournament. Call
Carol, season picking up. NB: when you move, move
fast. Words: precentor, deracinate, undine.
Letter to Dennis. *Call U.P. September.* What
the hell did she mean: I'm a poet?

Robert Bloom

JANUARY NIGHT

To Lee

Spell us this hour from sleep-fumbled rest
With your wordlets dropped in the dusk:
How owlets, heard scritching by bridges
Of snow, will flit back from bare brakes
And cold, to a soft-downed owl's breast
And the cosiness of rose your fingers know.

Treasure me too in that mother-rich place
Where noggins of babies start babbling
Like brooks that spill over speech dykes
Needing repair: turn us to silver of
That frozen canal, its lace of bent alder
Mounting dim banks to the great owl's wold.

Bind me in all tongues of eye-wide quest:
Your babes that stray off into brown roots
Of fear, bunnies plucked safe under cottonwood
Tree. Wind me in seas where goslings of sleep
Sail orphaned with you in the goosemother tale
We knew, as you unfold it, time and time ago.

Horace Hamilton

VERTIGO AND WET EVERGREEN

Vertigo and wet evergreen
Spindrift through waves; wind-
Skeined, your heart, my heart
Oar, Oar in the sun

Marsh and buzz
Dining needle, beetily
Thicken wax-faced water lily,
Heavy marshflower smell,
Pull on and no end but roots
To bottom

Prow us and drift
Swing round and merry
Sing oars, smack side;
Listen listen, tide draws
And seaboat wet climbs
Sweat blond legs

Muscle and blow home
To water's edge where
The other side breathes noise
Swift living,
Arms cling clockwise and two
Fall over, gifts of green wet,
Zing sun dry, boat bottom

Oars shipped, bark drifts
Top waves;
Let in sails, out breath
Oh over the landbranch harks
Summer bird cardinal red.

Alexandra Grilikhes

TWO POEMS

Woven Is This Boy

and he is a net for catching
things. His interlacing
nerves, green strands
yet undistended, are the close-
clinging mesh sweeping
beneath each stone, seining
the leaves: o woven is
this boy. But he had passed
mushrooms barely buttoned
and unblazed by turtles, and dewy runs
unrabbited—so anticipatory
the morning though yet lip-sealing
spring: passed mushrooms, runs,
oak, hickory, beech,
and not at last to willow,
and here, oh here—the only
whispering love within
these woods, spraying
the burgeoning willow's black
and dancing tresses clay-
unclad and piercing the ceiling—
fell the brook that had burst
continually upon him through this long
late snow. And here o yes here!
dreamt that emerald, curtain-
eyed, encaverned croak
that had so often before leapt
into the captivity of his thought.

(Soft the hunter, until down
a grass-sprout sight

he knows the two great bulges:
this is the time for the fawn's
degree, until the film has descended:
now!) nets! nets!
o quivering their need!

But when the will to cast
most commanded, the coolness
of the pool congealed his blood
and he was trickle-entranced,
mesmerized by the cool
love-breaths of the pool,
the glistening inverted dripping
hair of willows and the fragile
swelling frog-throat, colder
and whiter than snow in its dancing.

He never knew why, that when
he was most the net
for flinging, he had need to untouch
the stillness, to leave it there
enchanted and backing away
turn barefoot home
so much disturbed by silence.

R. G. Vliet

Hare And Hound:

Hermes *fils*, this!
O fleet he flees,
this deer-eyed urchin
skittering pell-mell
through the woods,
that immediate hound
his father close

behind and barking
against his backbone, bluffing
'Stop! I've *got* you!'
(Run! Run!
Run! Release
the rabbit in your thighs,
the deer in your eyes!)

Down immemorial
evening avenues
of autumn oaks
and maples bound
these two: a burning
pair at the game
of hare and hound.

Past the claw of the ridge,
over the teeth of the brook,
with a rabbit-intent
for brier and with
that immediate hound
his father close
behind and barking
upon his backbone, bluffing
'Stop! I've got you!'
he flings himself
into rabbit sanctuary
behind a brier
portal, hunches
frozen and softly
panting. For the hound
is at the door and coaxing
'You win. Come out.
I'll not hurt you.'
But fleeing has forced
the wild within him

pounding to the surface
and he will not respond,

is silent, until the sun
itself growls impatiently,
grows weary of waiting,
leaves. Only then,
stealthily testing
every movement carefully,
does he emerge,

go trembling
homeward into
the whispering window-
light, and (gliding
fearfully between
the shrieking door
and clamoring sill)
there to find
his father watching him—
not angry, but amused.

R. G. Vliet

TWO POEMS

Sandpipers

On delicate reedy legs
The sand-sure pipers skim
Inward and outward over the edge
Of breathing foam rim.
Collectively, they are
A nervous miracle; rime-

racing, dry legged, hearing the little
Suck! of ripple in the nick of time.

On luscious flesh pink legs
Lopes my yearling son
Unsteadily after them, coveting
Three or two or one
To shred lustily like a stuffed toy.
Singularly, I impute
Him status as a bungling miracle
Not yet articulate of tongue or foot.

Around me the sea chants
Of its loud hardihood
Impounded. My diapered son,
Still unaware how odd
Is gravity, goes splat!
In tangled seaweed. I wipe his eyes.
I tell him the race is not to the swift.
The squeaking pipers run, erect, from his cries.

Maxine W. Kumin

Snowscape

I waked this morning to a bandaged world,
Hospital-still. Only the muted trees
Stirred, sifting antiseptic talc
From branch to branch. The fence had curled
Its pickets into plaster-paris knees.
The tool shed was a swollen catafalque.

Lame world! I was alive, at least!
I dressed and hurried out to boast
And leapt, spread-eagled, on a starchy mound.
Dismayed, I found my breath released
The plasma of my unknown ghost;
Hard underneath, I jarred the frozen ground.

Maxine W. Kumin

THIS SIDE OF ASIA

I had a friend who would not rest
Until he climbed Mount Everest.

It was his secret; although he
Spoke of it in confidence to me.

He was decided to set out alone.
"As for a guide," he said, "I am my own."

So he equipped himself with ropes,
Spikes and axes for the steeper slopes.

And went. He really disappeared.
I heard no word for months. At last, I feared.

But bound to a confidence his words made clear,
I could tell no one of this mountaineer;

Therefore set out myself to find him. So
I went the direction that I saw him go.

And met him, suddenly alive, returning.
He was tired, but his eyes were burning.

He smiled, yet otherwise did not speak.
I did not ask about the mountain's peak.

And it became something we never said
A word about. Mount Everest was dead

As far as I cared. And more: it never was.
Nothing can change the world as living does.

Summer exceeded summer. But, one fall,
When fall succeeded summer, after all,

He spoke, like an echo of his early quest.
There are mountains higher than Mount Everest.

John Fandel

THREE POEMS

Cocktails Revisited

Only for me, the fair one waits,
Twitching the bed, dusting the plates,
Nibbling one from the ring of dates,
Waiting for me.

Waiting for me, the lady smiles,
Cracking the door, setting the dials;
Several come to sip the whiles,
Smiling for me.

Smiling for me, the damzel turns
To my soft step, while spirit burns
Under the steaming coffee-urns
Turning for me.

Turning for me, the lovely lays
Hand on my arm, and coyly says,
"George here now just spends his days
Laying for me."

Laying for me, a twitch unbidden
Opens the door to a dark one hidden,
Out of the midday into the midden,
Only for me.

George Starbuck

Oration

You, Charley, are in the old tradition, and I like you
for it.
You old horse, a dog is a dog to you, and a kind of
dog is a kind of dog.
Yon Cassius *does* have a biscuit-eating look; put him
in traces.
You're a real old-timer, Charley, no monkeybusiness:
Do what you think, speak what you think, hear what
you think.
This country needs a man that knows what he thinks,
and you know it.
Too much bull, or too much silence (the sage's
claptrap) foster dullness;
And as for the general good, you've made the general
general good your business:
Why who's added more to the public glitter, caused
more roads, thickened more cities?
At least you won't beg the ears off us, and I thank
you for it.
That you can leave to your curly Antonies; and if I
were Brutus . . .
But Brutus Inc. with roll of copper drums has papered
you for sure,
You hard-headed old asset, and from Egypt to
Philippi things darken.
We'll add our blows, for we love what you were, you
Man among Manners;
But By God you got off a good one going, Charley
you joker:
You showed them that one about Caesar's wife was
no guff.

George Starbuck

Apocalypse IX, Genesis X

angels swinging down from the blue
like bells with their clappers kicking—
More! Now trumpets flaring unmuted
and organs! Oh Dear, And organs:
Milton's unseemly conjectures exceeded
as angel on rollicking angel clashed like cymbals
their armor to bits, til glittering eggshells
of sudden creation littered the seething world.

and Oh the blush of the suddenly-covered
in vestry, on seabeach, in Chevvy,
to see each unspeakable legion lost.
but a chance! a chance! and the chancred,
the slickers, the shackers turn tattle tee-hee.
while noise (such unChurchly rhythms) shatters the
temples
and turns the saintliest souls out naked
to fly and blab to their God of that mutinous medley.

Now great grumping Jehovah sat
a high hard throne
exhorting the wingèd potencies
to leave no turn unturned
in the dance that levelled sea and sierra
to one delectable muddle of generation:
dinosaur dynasties, squiddy squirearchies,
lineage grosser yet to be cursed with Soul

salvoed in swing with a rhythm of ramrods
from well-drilled legions of wombs;
and still the stripped souls shuddered and fled
in a withering wind that wafted
God's very throne to earth on its howling

spaceward torrent of wretches; and plaintive voices
beseeching account of chastized wills,
of dire virginities, faded in faintest tumult

as morning and evening the godlings in ragtime
beat out the *first* second *third* fourth *fifth* sixth day
of creation and rested with *seven* eight *nine*
ten *twenty* til God's hand falling, *it was good.*
and God and his angels being alone
in Heaven, the Great Beard muttered
A damn sight better than last time, too,
you lazy putterers.

George Starbuck

A DIALOGUE OF THE HEART REFUSING COUNSEL

Heart you are caught; it's time to sing:
Tell it was two sly, casing eyes,
Two thieving accomplices, your hands,
Cost your arrest to your own surprise.
You'll be stir-crazy before it's done;
You'd better send for a shyster tongue.

Too implicated for legal tricks,
I must serve my time till the sentence ends.
Though love's but a theft and a stretch in jail,
I and my hands are very old friends:
Great robberies have kept me warm.
Hearts grow cold if the hands reform.

David Perkins

LOVE TRIBUTE

When I become a tongueless cry in the throat
Of a gull hooking over the sea on patrol for fish
When I become a lungless breath on the breast of a sky
Rinsed with the liquid note of an April wish
When I become the colorless soul of a pink and white
Blossom on a cherry bough
May you then look back through the million-eyed night
Upon the utter lack of any lie
In all the love I tell you now:
For I do not say that you are beautiful enough
To start a war
Or wise enough to bring about an armistice
Or foolish enough to try to rout a legion of dead
In the heart of a whore
Or passionate enough to bed
With reheaded devils by the score
And yet I say that when beauty wisdom folly
Passion—all that men have ever set their souls by—
Cease to be the songs for which young poets die
Then I can still say that once below eternity
I used to rise with every dawn and see
Within the eye beneath your eye
God Almighty riding silently
Upon the pulse of your peace.

John Nist

WHEN THE BOUGH BREAKS

He came to us vacant, afraid of his childrens' stares.
He suffered those final years like painful interruptions
(His hand would rise, brush away the pitiless sun,
The threat of detection in its generous, stupid face).
Not petulant, my grandfather bore his age in the perfect mask
Of a cosmic joke—one man's adjusted rage.

In 'eighty-five Joe carried water
To the Micks who pounded ties this side
Of Albany and swore they'd bust
This country higher than a kite.
The skinny kid could laugh and cuss,
They liked his style, the cocky head
And the sea of hair. An orphan he was and proud.
Thumbs locked in his striped suspenders,
He lurched the way on ties to Rensselaer
And courted Adeline—will you be mine?
(Her pa was wild for horses, sold
The farm, lit out with the sassy scullion.)
Joe's Irish landlady nagged him to church,
He even prayed a bit, and one day
He and frail Ad drove off to the priest . . .
For forty years he engineered
The black bucking steam-crazed animal
That twitched and quivered in his hands,
Roared, voracious of miles, and worked
In his nerves like a drug or a woman's face.
His fondling rough hand would ease
The lever down until the dial
Bumped hard against its cage . . . his head

Thrust far out, the wind tore at his cheeks
And whipped his eyes to labyrinths of blood.

Our hearts were closed like valves; trapped in a world
he never knew
(The spring air swirled in his old-man's dirty white
hair)
He sorted memories like medals—he became a child,
and cried
For the green fields he never saw, and the child he'd
never been.
The burning pressure in his temples swelled . . . at
night
He boomed in his sleep like a bell, as the staggering
bright-eyed
Monster blared and drove through the empty flats of
his brain.
He'd rise at dawn, white gown flapping, shout for his
men,
"Crew, Crew, Crew." The cracked voice rasped, the
wind-mill arms
Were strong as a youth's. He'd fight us to his knees
. . . cradle and all.
He left us in the breathless last of August (air wet to
the touch);
In the strangling heat, he laughed and laughed, be-
queathed us
The terror of his eyes. His memory is grit in our
mouths.

David J. DeLaura

THE MIRACULOUS MANDARIN

after Bartok

1. The mandarin set upon by thieves
Began like these—
As metal on the tongues of gongs—
Bronze rattling bronze.

He understood too late the meaning
Of the beaten gongs—
How, splitting the ripe fruit, they
Take abnormal root

In the prodigious grave underfoot,
And spring up like swans
With torches flaring in their throats—
Rattling their wings.

Rising with the notes that rose he
Discovered in himself
A process of the sacred fig whose fruit
Splits rock, claps bronze.

2. Aging, he saw too late
How acacias bloomed
On the low sills
And in the damp street
Where the yellow girl
Crooked her finger
Through the leaves.

"Come," she said—
"It is less than you
Think. The leaves know
Death. Will you be
Less than they? They

Know more than you?"
And so too late
He touched the leaves,
And knew the fruit,
And bloomed on the low sills
And in the damp street.

3. Rattling on the tongues of gongs
He came to his remembered end—

Heard cymbal crash and fig bellow,
And the thin shriek of a flute.

Behind him the thieves sprang up
Like swans, and beat their wings,

And slit his stomach like a purse,
And spilled his blood on the ground.

Ronald Perry

BUDDY

O we rolicked home from the Boar,
Tuns of mild and bitter on the links;
You, showing old Eli stuff, tore
For yardage while stars dropped gay winks.

O we quaffed torpedo juice down,
Passed out behind barracks on grass,
Quoted Keats near his own home town
To tarts like those from Boston, Mass.

O we scoured porcelain for sins,
Kept our score, listing officers.
Now you drink with oil paladins;
Their sophomore sons oil me with sirs.

Robert Tyler

REQUITAL

The great God is a just God:
For my stave
His guiding rod
He freely gave.
Joyful, I asked for gold:
Jewels fell galore,
So manifold
Much needed more.
Whereat I begged for state:
He tendered helm,
And shattering weight
Of surly realm.
I sighed for balm of love:
His deign let loose
Mild girl who wove
A snarling noose.
I whimpered to be healed:
He bandaged me,
Forever sealed
In memory.
The great God is a just God:
When I cried
For sleep in sod,
It was denied.

Donald Eastman

THE CITY

1. Byzantium

Quivering sound-waves quelled into silence above
drums of translucent skin dyed red and purple,
muted by fingers with tapering golden nails,
announce, in cessation, the withdrawal of the Empire
into the region of love's volition and love.
Empire, the Bride and fruit of the Bride's womb,
fathered by a thousand gods, caught
and cossetted in the laws of Rome,
the offspring of Helena's son's pride
and Mistress of Constantine's humility;
Empire, the aspiration of Christendom
and Christendom in its aspirations,
seen plainly in the golden domes and roofs
of Byzantium, the Bride's Body's image,
and in the columnar austerity of Rome; Empire
turns slowly out of focus and withdraws,
to be seen only in the golden lens
of poetry, in the saints' rages of vision,
and the lucid gaze of lover upon lover.
Time and space, like green bronze lions,
have guarded the glistening avenue to the Empire
upon which in a republic of comprehension
the God-man, carrying a cross and sceptre of flesh,
walked through the red gate in the city wall
to crown Constantine with a wealth of caring,
with the old agony and the new hope.
The Empire passes away, to muted drum,
to pass into the stream of earth's duration,
to reappear in an infinitude of loves,
to swell the currents of a shrinking world.

2. London

Logres lost, lapped in the liquid wash
of duration, London in the pool of England,
seen like a city sunken under water,
looses in its streets voices and shadows:
voices endlessly chattering, laughing,
babbling of fortunes, complaining of ecstasies,
shadows casting other shadows' shadows
on the flat walls yellowed by duration.
Duration, not time—for time is space's sister
and lies prostrate still over the carved tomb
of space in the other, vanished Caerleon,
dead of love and shattered union, dead.
The voices mingle in their independence,
the half-figured shadows move conjointly:
one in provincial tunic walks gravely
with snow-wigged belle in silver ball dress,
before whom a thin-faced cavalier
in crushed blue satin bows, lambent gentry
flow in and out of passing farmers, armour
of transparent torsos ascends in ladders of chivalry,
feet not quite tread 'Our-Lady's-Bed-Straw'
sprouting above the grey streets of London's duration.
Voices bubble up onto the surface,
burst in the hollow dialect of lost time,
space's sister, who both in images only
inhabit the edges and corners of drowned London;
voices tinkle in outland Latin, sunlight
absorbs echoes of chill Norman French,
whispering voices 'maken melodye'
in harmony with the rattle of the wheels
of gilded carriages on fragrant stones,—
these scraps, eternity overhead,

fall back gently and are borne away
by the foaming wash and eddy of duration.
In the juncture of light and shadow, in the angle
of sun refracted from the city's stasis,
time weeps perpetually over space
gone, gone with Logres in the Empire's going.
Each street's turning, each objective square,
echoes with the keening and the going.

3. New York

No currents nudge the past into the streets,
no curents of lost time coil underfoot
relics of old modes worn smooth by time.
Here duration emerges as present, present,
imaged in white stone and stairs of chromium
and the glinting dust of milled steel falling.
Yet here where the broken Empire has no meaning,
the Empire finds itself in its own loss,
fans out invisibly in the acts of its price.
The Emperor, chained with silver manacles,
and a collar of stiff-wrought gold about his neck,
stands in Times Square where time never came,
sad of the senior elements. Where the Empire never
came,
the Empire finds itself in its rejection.
The daylight comes, by a curious mechanism,
and the white towers aggravate the sun.
Built of the melted coin of kingdom and the Empire,
the towers with the power of the sun in vitreous
pinnacles
seem half the old mystery, and in the juncture
of line with line, point with point, dimly,

for an instant when the sun, by a cunning
mechanism,
fades where it must, and the lights of the city more
bright
than the fire of the high white magic of Byzantium,
surge Manhattan Island with bought brilliance,
can be seen the faint traces of the mystery,
gold domes behind the white towers,
and beyond the magnificence of burnished steel
wielding silver scimitars in light reflected,
the gift of God shining in the midst of barter.
The polished aluminum mirror of the evening
for one fleet moment of perception
shows lost Logres, the columns of dead Rome,
and the vision of Christendom, fading, glowing,
fading.
Then the taut towers impatient of space,
strummed like the plucked strings of a steel guitar,
shatter the image in their anxious splendour.
Here time wondering, wanders through streets
flowing
forward faster than duration; time,
ignored, unwanted, the last sister-guard
of the Empire, mourns the futility of space.
Yet the Empire, hurrying westward, curls around
the city more bright than ten suns' brightness,
a little out of reach, beyond the limit.
And from a million blazing windows peer
through illuminated streets into darkness
faces afraid of the dark and of the splendour.

Paris Leary

THE LAST DAY

The Day of Armageddon I recall:
A travelling alderman saw three stars fall
Near Lubboc, Texas with a greenish light.
They shot across the sky and passed from sight
Leaving behind an eerie afterglow
As they moved toward White Sands, New Mexico.

A hovering whirling disc was clearly seen
On the front page of the paper in Moline;
A tidal wave struck Wales, and a whale with hair
Swamped a boat in the mouth of the Delaware.

The very Univac that had been sent
To tell us we would have a president
Brought forth a special tape from a secret hole
Made to receive its yet unfinished soul.

What did the little perforations spell?
Run, you sinners!
And everyone ran like Hell.

Everyone ran that is, except a man
Down in the rough of a tough course near Spokane,
A number of couples in brambles, trams and cars,
A janitor who had gone to get cigars,
Some fishermen who thought the darkening skies
Might hurry along the early evening rise.

Everyone ran that is, but Circe's swine
Who wouldn't get over the stile tonight,
And nine
Lyre-horned bulls from Minos wouldn't go,
And their youths and maidens wouldn't leave them.
So
There things stood.

With a sort of mechanical cough
The Univac broke,
And they called the whole thing off.

Carlin Aden

TWO POEMS

The Man Upstairs

Invisible, but taut with weight,
he flushes toilets through my dreams.
Stepping, a spy, from stair to stair,
somedays his smoke is everywhere;
at other times, it almost seems
he died behind his door, like Fate.

Neighbor, shadow, unseen face,
sneaking mail the same as I,
poking fingers in a hole
where his name's scratched upon the wall,
for all of our humanity
we grow queer in this rented place.

At my window, like a stain
the fog spills, yet the moon comes out:
a streetwalker beyond compare
who wears the river in her hair.
I dream I flung the silver out
that lines her street. It starts to rain.

The man upstairs pulled the chain.

Felix Stefanile

Street Scene: The Drunk

Four corners watching him,
he stumbles into the street, into the traffic,
patiently shuffling, like a gladiator
bloodshot and rumpled, in that loud arena.

Whinnying wail of the wheels, and motorists
flailing his fear,
he bellows back, his cry
scattering imagination:

while a terror-stricken woman,
screaming and honking,
grinds to a stop before him, almost fainting.

Then a dozen horns blow organ-tones
to form the anthem he will march to,
making the curb at last, alone, alive,
to stand in sunlight, dripping miracles.

And the barber, still holding his scissors
runs back to his shop;
a news-stand owner, thrilling to prospects
of cheap destruction, turns once more to his pennies,

and where the old drunk walks, the crowd makes
room:
a shaggy aisle he walks through like a King
whose country is Plague.

Felix Stefanile

FOO'S PLACE

the time is pleasant in Foo's place
with Christmas hanging greenly from the ceiling
and Beethoven out of the machine on the wall
not a face unsmiling is here
where all is happiness and wellfed by juicy pork
wonton spareribs sharsudin fried lobster
samipia and soey sauce
with waiters all fancy in dirtywhite greasy on ball-
bearings
to and fro with cooked dead things on shiny trays
all tasty
thisandthat chop suey goopan eggroll subgum
chow mein egg foo yung wonton
all smoking hot with sweet tea and flashing teeth
to finally a fortune cookie
FALL IN LOVE it says
and I burp

Melvin Howard

TO T.S.

"Antiquity is always classic."—**John Dewey**

O wad some power the giftie gie me
To see the iniquity of antiquity,
To see how Odysseus, the meat slicing machine,
Dispatched the suitors in heroic routine,
Or how the Inquisition made safe
The One, True, and Apostolic Faith;
With plops of yellow blubber piled on the floor
Six purple deadmen puffed to oar ashore;
From the heinous heaps mauve steam wiggled in the
air,

And with squeaking creaks they rowed with despair
To where, the lethal threesome, the fatal sluts
Were snipping little snips of chicken guts;
A sinewy melody singes the wind,
For Sally, the Siren, sings her song of sin;
And while twelve red eyeballs roll in the snow,
Clytemnestra chops them with a hoe.

G. Yoos

SUNSET APOCALYPSE

For a terrible moment the sky fierced and throbbed
with the gold and purple wings of seraphim!
Plume against plume, they arched from west to east,
lifting long swords of fire;
and the sea, an awakened angel, shone
with sudden peacock colours, raised his voice and
billowed:
Holy Holy Holy.
Miracle threatened the earth.

And we, going home across the dunes, turned
startled faces
to those prophetic hosts
and cried in half-belief: It is the end of the world!

Then somewhere beyond the light God must have
said: Not Yet.
His Hand drew darkness over the sky, the sea,
and the earth was saved once more from
intolerable glory.

Leah Bodine Drake

STREET SONG FOR TWO FLUTES

Her smile when the buses had almost stopped
running
and only the corner newsmenboys
were holding reign over the streets of night
was after all a gesture of significance.

Not like the taxis on the stand their engines running
nor the crippled laughter of the newsmenboys—
symphony for hoarse and imbecilic throats of night—
she had somewhere to go of signficance.

In front of the Free Christian Science Reading Room
and across from the real estate agency
she was an ornament under the lights and to speak
to her
would mean to break esthetic distance.

Thus upon a corner until the bus finally came
two became one without words.
We found a seat together. There was only the driver
and now even the bus had somewhere to go of
significance.

Eric A. Pfeiffer

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